



DATCP Cautions Consumers to Avoid the Gold Rush

Release Date: November 3, 2011

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MADISON – With gold prices still sky-high, consumers are eager to cash in by selling old jewelry – and crooks are ready to take advantage. Whether you’re considering selling a broken necklace or a family heirloom, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) warns consumers to do their homework before selling gold.

“When it comes to selling gold, it’s ‘seller beware,’” said Sandy Chalmers, Administrator of the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “Know the karat and weight of your gold before you sell, or you may end up being shortchanged.”

The price paid for gold is based on the purity (karat) and weight. As a seller, you have a right to observe the buyer determine the purchase price. Watch the scale as the buyer weighs your gold. Make sure the scale has been inspected, sealed by DATCP or a city sealer, and approved for weighing precious metals. The scale should be level and read “zero” before beginning to weigh.

If you know the karat weight of your item, verify that it matches the buyer’s estimate. Buyers may use acid to establish purity of the gold. Ask questions about the kind of acid being used, and whether it is appropriate for your gold.

“Be cautious about selling to transient gold buyers,” Chalmers added. “These businesses may set up at a local hotel promising to pay top dollar for gold, and leave town quickly. Unfortunately, they also leave unpaid or underpaid victims behind.”

The Bureau of Consumer Protection offers these consumer tips when selling gold:

- Shop around. Visit at least two stores in one day to compare offers to guarantee you are getting the best price.
- Beware of transient gold buyers. Sell to a local business with a well-established track record.
- Get written estimates that include details of the items and their worth.
- Verify the weight and karat value on the receipt matches the weight on the scale and results of the acid test.

For more information or to file a consumer complaint, visit the Bureau of Consumer Protection’s website at datcp.wisconsin.gov; send an email to datcph hotline@wisconsin.gov; or call toll-free at 1-800-422-7128.

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